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CHURCH PATRONAGE.

A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. ROBERT PEEL, M.P. &c. &c. &c.

LONDON:
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET, STRAND.

S S.W.1828.

CHURCH PATRONAGE.

A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. ROBERT PEEL, M.P. &c.

BY

A SON OF THE CHURCH.

Οὐ τοσουτον ἡ φαύλη συνηθεια, ὅσον ἡ βλαβερωτάτη τῶν πραγμάτων διαφθορὰ ἐξ αυτων των θεμελίων εστιν εκριζωτέα.

Canon 1. *Conc. Sardic. Hosii Cordubæ Episcopi, Sententia.*

Nullus nos metus, nullus terror inflectat, quo minus traditam nobis fidem custodiamus.

Lactantii Epit. p. 695.

LONDON:
JOHN HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.
1828.

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BIBLIOTHECA · BODLEIANA

CHURCH PATRONAGE.

SIR,

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, with gratitude to "THE DEFENDER OF HER FAITH," accepts, in your return to the Councils of HIS MAJESTY, a pledge of her present peace.

With full confidence in your attachment to the principles of the Church, and in perfect reliance upon your protection of her dearest interests, I take the liberty as a member of the same communion, respectfully, but candidly to call your attention to the momentous subject of this letter; a subject in which thousands of the best educated, most deserving, most loyal, and *worst remunerated* of his Majesty's people, are most deeply interested.—I mean the Clergy—the "*working Clergy*," as they have been somewhat contemptuously, but not unjustly denominated.

The Patronage of the Church, by the consent of The Sovereign, has been vested since the accession of the Royal Family of Hanover in the *Prime Minister* of the Crown. Many deem this a necessary and constitutional privilege, most properly conceded to the responsible head of the government. With respect to the *constitutional* character of the privilege, I will not venture to give an opinion—that question is the property of statesmen and lawyers.

The *necessity* of the measure is an ambiguous term, and I fear rather referrible to the political position of the Minister, than to the real interests of the Church. But *the propriety* lies within a narrow compass, and can only be referred to *the welfare of the Church.* On this point, therefore, I beg leave to offer a few remarks, which, as they are made in perfect sincerity and cordial goodwill towards the head of the present government, will, I trust, be received without suspicion of hostility. Should the manner in which I may give expression to them be repugnant to your views of public decorum, I trust you will pardon me; and impute to excess of zeal in a cause *unquestionably good,* any excess of feeling with which I may advocate it. Should the opinions also which I may advance, be not consonant with your own, I trust you will again pardon me; for it is not always our happiness to entertain on a given subject, the same sentiments with

those whom we admire and esteem and desire to honour.

THE PATRONAGE OF THE CHURCH can never be an object of inferior interest in any Christian country. In this country it is obviously the most important of all questions affecting the domestic government. In no nation has religion taken a deeper root in the minds of men, and in no nation is religion more vigorously assailed by its adversaries. It is, therefore, a consideration of paramount importance, TO WHOM the power of rewarding clerical merit may be entrusted, with the best assurance that it shall not be abused. The condition of the Church at the present moment demands the consideration of this important question. I do not deduce this inference from the idle conjectures and querulous tones of party newspapers, but from a serious review of the state of religious feeling throughout the country.

I look upon the bench of bishops, and I behold a body of men, for the most part pre-eminent in learning and exemplary zeal for religion, either silently dishonoured or openly insulted by the hired press of a party now powerful in the state. I see the journals in the train of this faction acrimoniously reviling or maliciously sneering at the most respectable of these dignitaries, and never omitting an opportunity of exaggerating the errors or deriding the zeal of the

most able ministers of the Church. Some of the most pious bishops upon the bench are stigmatized as "Evangelical," (that we should live to see this word a term of reproach!!) because they inforce with an earnestness more than ordinary among churchmen, the doctrines of the gospel: others are denominated "presumptuous and morose," because they reprove the irrregular and alarm the indolent; and it is not very long since a noble promoter of "*liberalism*" had the want of feeling and of prudence to apostrophize as a "FIREBRAND," one of the most meek and single-hearted of prelates or men. When I consider that this hostility against the Church of England is not the child of a moment, but has been gradually increasing with the growth of thirty years; that it was generated in the ashes of the French Revolution, which being "sprinkled" over England "became a boil breaking forth with blains" upon this unhappy country;—when I consider that this hostility is no longer confined to the ignorant and vulgar, but reckons among its cherishers some of the most wealthy of the nobility, some of the most acute of the lawyers, some of the most popular of the demagogues, *some of the most artful of the statesmen*, I cannot but feel that "The Church in Danger" is no longer an idle or a party cry: and that, if the danger has been for the present most providentially averted, the time is come when an

effectual security should be obtained against the chance of its recurrence.

In entering upon the subject of THE SECURITY OF THE CHURCH, I beg it may be most distinctly and unequivocally understood, that I do not come forward as a *party-man*, but as a *church-man*. For however I may lament false principles of war, commerce, or domestic policy, I leave the exposure of them to men more interested in the questions. In my mind the danger to *the Church* is more obviously imminent, and more peculiarly interesting, as being that which is most fatally effective when unchecked. The ravages of war imprudently incurred or unjustly aggravated, may be repaired by timely peace; the loss of trade may be surely, though slowly compensated, by the repeal of impolitic and empirical enactments; an irritated populace may be restored to contentment, by a change of obnoxious men or measures—but a church once infected with heretical opinions, will take ages to recover her pristine integrity.

The danger which is apprehended by the Church of England, is from the prevailing spirit of reckless indifference, misnamed "Liberality," which, having found an access to the vitals of the state, is insinuating its poison into the heart of the Church. This indifference to received opinions, rejoicing in the appellation of "Contempt for the Wisdom of Ancestors," may trifle with

the best institutions of our country, until "country" be but a name, without a title to attachment: and should it once pass the threshold of our Catholic Church, from the moment that the Church is "liberalized" to meet the "liberality of the age," from that moment begins the fall of the Protestant Faith. For "LIBERALITY" in politics, is INDIFFERENCE in religion.

If the Church of England accepts, in your return to the government, a pledge of her present peace; no less does she recognize in the accession of the Duke of Wellington, the presence of the deliverer and friend of his country: and she cannot but believe, that the first patriot of his age, will direct the energies of an active mind to the preservation of her integrity. But, the Church has enemies, and they are powerful; many of her friends, who might be powerful, are lukewarm and temporizing: human life is uncertain, and human affairs unstable—and therefore, to insure the future peace of the Church, and inviolability of her doctrines, let her bulwarks be strengthened while the invaders are distant. For should any untoward circumstances bring upon the nation the calamitous visitation of a "liberal" Ministry, it will be too late to shut the door when the enemy is on the threshold. A "liberal" Ministry will promote "liberal" Bishops, "liberal" Bishops will produce "liberal" Clergy, and "liberal Clergy will carry

the "liberalism" of their politics into the doctrines which they teach, and the duties which they inculcate—and it requires not the foresight of a prophet to perceive the ultimate subjugation of Christianity to "*Philosophy*," and order to confusion.

At the same time that I express these anxious apprehensions, I will take leave to affirm, that I am not of that school of alarmists which "sees substances in shadows," or "fire in smoke"—that I am not one of those, once described by a "liberal" Prelate, as "ready to cry fire in the midst of water." I can perceive the necessity of many reforms as clearly as the most sanguine and visionary "liberal," or as the most discontented and repining Whig. I am of opinion, that persecution only generates obstinacy in the parties persecuted—and that toleration is the best policy, when it can be given without danger. But if I give toleration, I demand it. If I permit the Dissenter the free exercise of his opinions, I demand that he shall not be plotting to subvert mine. If, for instance, I gladly resign to the Socinian adversary the power to marry or bury those of his own communion, I require that he shall not do violence to my feelings by compelling me to enrol in a Register of *Christians*, the names of those who reject Christ from their religion. Should he insist, on the contrary, that

I *shall* enrol them, I feel that his design, however covered by subterfuge, is to DEGRADE MY ORDER, and BRING THE CHURCH INTO CONTEMPT: and if I raise my voice against such an encroachment upon my liberties, *am I intolerant?* Am I *a visionary alarmist*, if I deem the Church to be in danger, when the prejudices of all schismatics are to be consulted before those of her own ministers?

Again, my principle of toleration assures me, that were the question of the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics, a question SOLELY between HONEST Papists and conscientious Protestants, I could bend to the supplications, though NOT TO THE THREATS of the Irish people: I could admit them to privileges now only to be enjoyed by their more peaceful and patriotic fellow-subjects of the reformed church.

But when, in the furtherance of that measure, I perceive THE PRESENT, and in the success of it, THE FUTURE UNION OF ALL THE ENEMIES OF OUR RELIGION, I cannot consent to think so meanly of my profession of the Protestant faith, as to call either my zeal, *fanaticism;* or my caution, *bigotry;* or my apprehensions, *idle fears:* I cannot consent to subscribe to that apathy which would stand by unconcerned, while the whole edifice is tottering, and not stoop to pick up a stone to repair the breach. FOR I CANNOT FOR-

GET the following suggestion of A VERY LIBERAL Whig prelate, once anxiously recommended to the adoption of a WHIG MINISTRY :—

"A reformer of Luther's temper and talents, would in five years persuade the people to *compel* the PARLIAMENT *to abolish tithes . . . . to expunge the Athanasian Creed from the Liturgy; to free Dissenters from test acts,* and *the Ministers of the Establishment from* SUBSCRIPTION TO HUMAN ARTICLES OF FAITH!!! THESE and OTHER MATTERS, respecting THE CHURCH, OUGHT TO BE DONE. I want not courage to attempt doing that which I think ought to be done; and I am not held back by considerations of personal interest, but my temper is peaceable," &c.*

This suggestion, Sir, was made by a prelate promoted to the episcopal bench by LORD SHELBURNE; and I conceive it may be regarded as a specimen of what the present "liberal" spirit of Whiggism would gladly attempt, were the power conceded to it by the appointment of a Whig Ministry. The prelates created by such a Ministry, might not be deterred, by "the peaceableness of their tempers," from doing that which they think *ought* to be done." Unlike the "liberal" Bishop of Llandaff, they would find their *interest* commensurate with their

* Bishop Watson, in a letter to the Duke of Grafton, 1791. —Memoirs of Bishop Watson, p. 256.

inclination; and I should be sorry to find that the only security of the Church was in "the peaceableness of their tempers." But there is another consideration of weight, besides the certainty of Whig hostility against the Church, and the existence of Judasses within the pale of the Establishment. It is to be found in the disposition of the people. The state of the populace is much more favourable to this attempt upon the doctrines of the Church of England now, than it was in the days of Bishop Watson. *There is no national feeling* to set in array against the *inventions of a foreign enemy.* The "majesty of the people" stalks in native dignity to the schools of philosophy and "liberal" sciences; and having before its eyes a Church Establishment of its own, from which ALL RELIGION IS TO BE EXCLUDED, would, without the persuasion of a philosophical Luther, "in less than five years, compel the Parliament to abolish tithes, expunge the Athanasian Creed from the Liturgy, free the Dissenters from test acts, and the Ministers of the Establishment from subscription to human articles of faith."

A consummation so devoutly desired by Whig liberals, is one which I deem it my duty, as a member of the Church of England, most strongly to deprecate; and I give expression to my feelings, in the hope that some of the more talented and zealous members of the same communion,

may give expression to theirs; that the faith for which LATIMER and RIDLEY laid down their lives, may not be "liberalized" into philosophy by "the spirit of the times." The "Liberalism" which would affect this, is the same which, under various characters, has been plotting against our country since the fall of the French Republic. At one time it assumed the appearance of sensitive patriotism, commiserating the sufferings of a "starving people:" at another, it was justice! indignant in the cause of "injured innocence" and "purity, like unsunned snow:" and now it assumes the comeliness of universal philanthropy, seeking the instruction and illumination of the mechanic, and the emancipation from slavery of "the most oppressed people in the world."

Your noble relinquishment of "power without honour," when you found yourself in contact with this insidious enemy, opened the eyes of thousands, who had hitherto beheld nothing in "Liberalism" but benevolence—nothing in Whiggism but honest zeal against the profusion of State Ministers. In you, therefore, the hopes of the best portion of the country rest, and to you the Church of England looks up as to her friend and protector. To you, therefore, as an unit among millions of the same principles, I address my feeble voice—to you, the representative of an University, which has always

maintained the most upright politics; the defender of the Church against her oldest enemy; a chief among the nobility,* who preferred honourable privacy to influential public station without honour; and THE MAN whose judgment is unwarped by vulgar prejudice, and not to be bewildered by figures of rhetoric, or flashes of mechanical patriotism. But I will not detain you from the subject.

> Cum tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus
> Res "Anglas"† armis tuteris, moribus ornes,
> Legibus emendes, in publica commoda peccem
> Si longo sermone morer tua tempora.

This letter was in the press, under very different auspices, at a time when the enemies of the Church of England were fast climbing into power; when every papist, every Socinian, every radical, every atheist, every outcast of the moral or religious world, was a ministerial man. Thanks to the patriotic spirit of our Sovereign, the face of the government is materially and beneficially altered.

But notwithstanding the present more favourable aspect of the government, experience admonishes us, that human life is uncertain, and human hopes unstable, while the interest of the evil-disposed requires that no intrigue shall be un-

* NOBILITAS *sola atque unica* VIRTUS.

† *Eloquii.*

attempted to compass their own ends. While our foes are awake, shall our friends sleep? Shall we be lulled into security by the present calmness which surrounds us? *Is that* the policy of the mariner just rescued from a storm? Does he not take advantage of the ensuing calm, to repair the damage sustained in the tempest, and to secure his vessel against future danger? Let the same policy be pursued to secure the Church, and it will matter less whether Whig or Tory, "Liberal" or Rational be the character of the government. So that the religion of the country be sound, no lasting mismanagement need be apprehended at the helm of the state. Common sense will repair the injuries of ignorance or fraud.

I. The SECURITY which presents itself as the most effective and durable, is A MORE JUDICIOUS ALLOTMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH PATRONAGE than that which has hitherto prevailed in this country.

The weak points in our Church Polity are—

1. *The dependence of her Bishops upon the will of a State Ministry.*

2. *The application of her benefices in the gift of the Crown, to reward political partizanship.*

The removal of these impediments to the true welfare of the Church is the firmest ground of her security in "perilous times."

On this subject, as on all others, "*fas est et ab hoste doceri.*" I shall therefore avail myself of some of the notions of Bishop Watson, for the reformation of church discipline. For when the aberrations of his genius were corrected, the light which it imparted fell strongly and directly upon the object in view, and disclosed at once its beauty or deformity. Respecting the dependence of bishops upon the will of a state ministry, Bishop Watson recorded the following opinion:—

"I considered the possession of it *(a bishopric)* as one great cause of personal demerit; for I saw the generality of Bishops bartering their independence, and the dignity of their order, for the chance of a translation."

He recorded this opinion in his private memoirs upon his appointment to the bishopric of Llandaff: an appointment of which he says "*he had no great reason to be proud; for he thought he owed it, not to any regard which he* * *who gave it, had to the zeal and industry with which he had discharged the functions of an academic life; but to the opinion which he had entertained* (the Bishop says "*erroneously*") *that he was a*

* Lord Shelburne.

warm, and might become an useful partizan." —A confession very apposite to the axiom which I have laid down—that *a Whig Ministry will promote Whig Bishops for the furtherance of political purposes.* The charge thus unhesitatingly brought by Bishop Watson against the Bishops of his time, is happily untenable against the bench promoted by Lord Liverpool. For the principles of the Prime Minister being in unison with those of the Church, "the generality of the Bishops," or any of them, could not "barter their *Independence* for the chance of a translation." Clerical Whigs were then "*raræ aves,*" few clergymen refusing to honour the nobleman whose first object in preferring a clergyman, was to reward *clerical* merit. The administration of the Duke of Wellington has begun upon the same principle. The appointment of *Mr. Lonsdale* to the living of Bloomsbury, is an earnest of future justice to the church of England. It is upon a consideration of this happy omen, that I have new-modelled this Letter, and committed it to the press. For however the suggestions contained in it may seem to imply distrust in the present head of the Administration, such an inference is the last which I would desire to be made. No, Sir; it is because I am assured that his Grace the Duke of Wellington is independent of the immoral influence to be acquired by possession of *the Church Patronage,* that I ap-

peal to his judgment to assent to my remarks. He needs not the possession of any patronage but that of his good principles, to administer the affairs of this nation happily. The surrender of any branch of public patronage will only tend to the diminution of those opponents, who only oppose him in the vain hope of being bribed into silence. Nothing therefore which I may say in the subsequent parts of this Letter, can apply to him, because he neither requires the possession of the peculiar patronage which I deprecate, nor abuses it. My suggestions are prospective, on the broad argument of the uncertainty of human life, and the certainty of the increasing hostility to the Church which is manifested among some of the most powerful of her contemners.

Before I take the liberty of suggesting a plan for the security of the Church, I will cursorily survey the prerogative of THE SOVEREIGN to appoint Bishops in the Church of England.

In the primitive church, the election of Bishops was vested in the Clergy conjointly with the people. The people were the judges of the moral character of the candidate, and the Bishops who were to consecrate him scrutinized his doctrines. Previous to the consecration, public notice was given, that whoever had anything to allege against the morality of the candidate, was at liberty to do so within a given time. If no

charge was substantiated the consecration proceeded. * The Apostles being under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, had no need of calling in the assistance of other Christians to select those on whom they should confer "the care of the Churches." They appointed their own successors without any consultation with the Church at large. But as these successors could not set up the same pretensions to absolute authority, they resorted to what was in those times a more reasonable method, *popular Election superintended by episcopal scrutiny.* A system so cautious was absolutely required in the first ages of the Church, when the election of an heretical or ignorant Bishop might have endangered the existence of the Christian religion. The happy effect of this caution, was visible in the preservation of the Christian faith during a series of ten persecutions. Bishops elected for their *clerical* merits and not *secular* influence, transmitted the faith to the remotest generations, so that, under God, the integrity of our religion *now,* is to be attributed to the vigilance with which the Christians of the first three centuries scrutinized the characters of their Bishops *before election.* Under Constantine the Great, the Church having emerged from pagan persecutions, rose to rank and importance as an integral part of the state. For some time ecclesiastical

* Dupin, Mosheim, Milner, &c.

appointments were judiciously bestowed by the clergy and the people—the emperor scrupulously abstaining from an interference, which he deemed irregular. But the episcopal chair having become a secular dignity, and not unfrequently the source of wealth and magnificence to its possessor, became the object of avarice and ambition to the nobles. To obtain, at any sacrifice, the popular voice, was therefore the aim of many an ambitious nobleman, who was a candidate for the prelacy. To effect this, every species of corruption was employed, so that the election of a prelate presented to the Greeks and Romans, those complicated scenes of baseness and brutality which so often disgrace our parliamentary elections. Public harangues, private bribery, extravagant promises, and high pretensions, were the steps by which a candidate ascended the episcopal chair. Tumult always, and sometimes bloodshed attended his elevation. At length the Emperor Justinian, wearied by these enormities, took the power of electing Bishops out of the hands of the people and Clergy, and vested it in the nobility. * But the Clergy and people again recovered their privileges under his successors. The former generally endeavoured, and sometimes contrived to exclude the latter from the franchise, upon the plea of the apostolical institution, but the notion of *popular*

* Gibbon iii. 281. *Note.*

right survived the fall of the empire. Upon the separation of the western and eastern empires, the clergy of the former generally exercised the elective franchise without lay participation; but not always. Several instances occur in which the people claimed and exercised their ancient privilege: and even down to the twelfth century we meet with traces of lay election of Bishops.* After that period the Clergy prevailed. The Gothic and Lombard kings of Italy followed the example of the early emperors of Constantinople in never interfering with the election of Bishops. But the French monarchs of the race of Charlemagne *contrary to their own laws,*† very frequently assumed the sole power of appointment. It was the custom, however, that when a Bishop died, the Clergy should petition the king to appoint the candidate whom they named, as his successor. Upon which a decree was issued, generally appointing the candidate named. In after times, when the liberty of election was restored to the Clergy, the metropolitan used to petition the sovereign in their behalf for *leave to choose,* requesting at the same time that a president of the election might be appointed. The metropolitan having received the royal license and nomination of the president,

* Hallam on the Middle Ages, ii. 253.

† See a Law of Clotaire II. cited by Hallam, ii. 254.

addressed a circular to the Clergy, beginning with these words—" Quia patre defuncto dilecto, &c. Electione canonicâ a Domino nostro Rege, vobis solitâ benignitate concessâ, &c." The election was, as a matter of course, confirmed by the king. In England, it is supposed that during the Saxon Heptarchy, Bishops were appointed in the wittenagamot: and even in the reign of William the Conqueror, who had partially submitted to the pope, Lanfranc was elected Archbishop of Canterbury by a royal mandate, with the consent of parliament. William was not of a temper to brook papal dominion; he therefore willingly took hold of a national custom, and made use of his parliament to promote his views. This was the last election of a Bishop in which the laity of this country were legitimately concerned. William Rufus however, and Henry the Second, appointed Anselm and Becket Archbishops of Canterbury, respectively, without any previous communication with the pope. But when Becket had taken refuge with the pope from the anger of his sovereign he resigned his insignia of episcopacy to the pontiff, as having unduly received them from lay hands. From the days of Pope Gregory the Seventh and William the Conqueror, there had been a continual struggle between the pope and the contemporary kings of Europe, respecting the *investiture* of Bishops. This was a device in-

vented by Charlemagne, and for some little time successfully used by princes to intimate their power of creating Bishops. It consisted in *investing* the new prelate with a ring and crosier at the time when he did homage to his sovereign for his temporalities. This artifice did not long escape the proverbially acute eye of the court of Rome. The "Vicegerent of God," who was contemporary with William the Conqueror, was not a man to be outwitted or intimidated by kings. Gregory the Seventh declared boldly, in the face of Christendom, that all potentates held their dominion under a commission from the church of Rome; and that it was "monstrous to imagine, that he who had authority to judge of things celestial, should not have control over things terrestrial." Leaving Lanfranc to contend with the usurper of England, he himself undertook the task of humbling the more formidable emperor of Germany, Henry the Fourth. "He began by excommunicating some of the ministers of that monarch, under pretence of simony; and made it a ground of remonstrance that they were not instantly dismissed."* His next step was to publish a decree against the "impious" practice of lay investiture, which was pronounced to be an usurpation of the rights of the pope; the ring and crosier being emblems of the episcopal and spiritual commission, the *ring* denoting his *marriage* with the diocese, and the *crosier*

* Hallam, ii. 260.

his *pastoral* charge. Though Gregory lived to bring Henry to submission for resisting his authority, he died before he could accomplish the surrender of the investiture, having at first overcome, and finally been overpowered by that potentate. But his successors were worthy of the chair of Gregory. Urban the Second, and Paschal the Second, did not relax their exertions, until the latter had brought the son of Henry the Fourth to the desired terms. The emperor resigned his pretensions to invest with the ring and crosier, and was happy to be allowed the privilege of receiving homage from his Bishops for their temporalities. The like terms were made with Henry the First of England, by the same victorious pope. The only European sovereign who retained the privilege of creating Bishops was the king of Castile, who had the cunning or the good fortune to obtain from Urban the Second the power of nominating to sees in his own dominion. It is said, however, that this privilege is renewed by the pope to each succeeding king of Spain during his life, as a particular mark of indulgence to "the most dutiful son of the church."

When the emperors of Germany had surrendered their claims, the power of electing Bishops was vested by the pope in the chapters of cathedral churches:* the rest of the Clergy being deemed incompetent to make a choice. From

* Anno 1122.

thenceforward the custom prevailed throughout the spiritual dominions of the pope. In England capitular elections were always nominally held, but the sovereigns of the country were virtually the electors, subject however to the confirmation of the pope. Henry the Second made a strong effort to perpetuate the nomination of the crown, by requiring, in the celebrated *Constitutions of Clarendon,* that "the Chapter or such of them as he might please to summon, should sit in the King's Chapel till they had made the new election with his consent."*

The nominal elective power of chapters subject to the approval of the reigning pontiff, continued without material interruptions, until Henry the Eighth, by an Act of Parliament bearing date 1534, dispossessed the pope of all participation in the choice, and decreed that Bishops should be henceforth chosen by a *congè d'elire* from the crown; or, in case of the dean and chapter refusing to accept the *recommendation* of the sovereign, the appointment should take place by letters patent.† He borrowed this probably from the custom of the Gallican church, improving upon it however, in favour of the crown.

Upon this principle the kings of England have acted ever since. *The election* is with the dean and chapter of each diocese, but the

* Hume. Hist. i. 394. † Hume. iv. 118.

sovereign *recommends;* and though the dean and chapter are not actually "shut up in the King's Chapel" until they have made a *choice,* yet it would be a pleasant spectacle to see them refractory, even in this enlightened age.

In this condition, therefore, stands the king's prerogative to create Bishops. The chapter *elects,* the sovereign *recommends.* Should it therefore ever become a question in Parliament, whether it would not be an infringement upon the royal prerogative, to petition His Majesty to give up his right of recommendation, I consider that it may be answered in the *negative.*

The Sovereign, by granting the *congè d'elire* disclaims the right of *election;* and the mere fact of his *recommending,* does not involve any thing compulsory upon the chapter. The privilege, therefore, of *recommending,* can scarcely be called a *prerogative.* If, therefore, the welfare of the church should at any time require, that a mere *congè d'elire* should be issued without any *recommendation* from the crown, we can scarcely deem a petition to His Majesty to this effect, disrespectful; or consider the Sovereign who magnanimously accedes to it, as yielding up any portion of his royal dignity. Retaining the *congé d'elire,* he retains his PREROGATIVE.

II. Having arrived at this point of my argument, I beg leave, with deference to your ac-

knowledged judgment, to remark, that *the time is come* when it would be beneficial to the Church of England, were His Majesty most graciously to relinquish his right of *recommendation to Bishoprics.* And were His Majesty so pleased, (as upon perception of its utility he doubtless would be,) *the time is come* when Parliament should devise the proper remedies to place the Church beyond the reach of her accumulating dangers. To this end a BILL might be introduced, either

1. *To prohibit the Translations of Bishops,* or,

2. *To render them subservient to a Law of Rotation,* or,

3. *To vest all Elections or Translations of Bishops in the hands of the Bishops themselves.*

The *first* plan would be sufficient for *one* of the purposes required, the emancipation of the Bishops from the control of dangerous ministers.

The *second* plan would be attended by this additional advantage, that the most venerable and experienced Prelate would always preside over the affairs of the Church.

But *the third plan might embrace every advantage.* To this, therefore, I would give the preference:—because it would most effectually secure the purity of the Church; most amply dignify the character of the prelacy; and be most in accordance with the first act of apostoli-

cal discipline upon record, the election of Matthias *by the remaining apostles to supply the Bishopric of the traitor Judas.*

1. A Bill to prevent the Translations of Bishops, would be nothing new. Such a Bill was brought into the House of Commons in 1701, and having been read *twice*, was committed April 23d of the same year. It was, however, lost in the Committee, in consequence of the ingenious artifice of an adversary, who contrived to insert a clause respecting the Elections of Mayors of towns, and other Civil Officers. The Bill was entituled, "A Bill for the Preservation of the Protestant Religion; and to prevent the Translation of Bishops."*

A further power was granted to the Committee to consider "the best means of increasing the value of the smaller Bishoprics."

The opposition to this Bill was very great among the Dissenters; and a *Socinian* Baronet is said to have taken a very active part in its overthrow. My authority (a contemporary pamphlet in Sion College Library) does not mention his name: but the circumstance is sufficient to show, *what kind of people would be the most active in opposing so beneficent a measure.* The venerable Bishop of Winchester of that time, is said to have taken a great interest in the success of the original Bill, which

* See Parliamentary Journals, vol. 13.

having the absurd clause respecting Civil Officers attached to it, failed, principally on that account.

I cannot find that the measure was ever resumed. The death of King William, the glories of Queen Anne, and the domestic agitations of the reigns of the first two Georges, might turn the attention of the legislature to other points. So that the next prelate whom I find advocating the *equalization of Bishoprics*, and *Prevention of Translations*, was Dr. Watson, the memorable Bishop of Llandaff. Among all his eccentricities, it was one of the greatest, that having proposed the best method of *destroying* the Church, he should suggest with equal warmth, the best method of *perpetuating* it:—that having recommended "the release of the ministers of the establishment from subscription to all *human articles of faith*," he should likewise suggest the prevention of Epispocal Translations. His *plan* I will take into consideration in a following part of this Letter. Notwithstanding the *necessity* of his support to the administration of Lord Shelburne, he could never prevail upon that minister to promote his Bill. Nor do I imagine that it will be easy to persuade any *Whig* minister to make such a sacrifice of power. It is possible that Lord Shelburne's intimacy with Dr. Priestley might have

induced the minister to consult his librarian on the subject; and if so, we can easily account for his refusal to introduce the Bill. Dr. Priestley, a *Socinian*, would have as strong an interest against any plan for strengthening the Church of England, as "the Socinian Baronet," who was instrumental in throwing out the Bill of 1701. The reason why a Whig minister, who may not be hostile to the doctrines of the Church, should refuse to entertain such a Bill, is evident from the probable effects of it upon his power in the House of Lords. The *natural* feelings of the Clergy are so inimical to Whig politics, that were the Bishops under such an administration to be emancipated from the Ministry, *they would generally oppose their measures*. Whereas, a Tory administration being congenial with their principles, there is no need of any such immoral influence to sway the consciences of the Bishops. Taught by their religion to revere the sovereign, they are led by principle to prefer order before confusion, and honesty before hypocrisy.

It is, therefore, less probable, that the Bishops who now adorn the Bench, should object to any measure which tends to secure their independence, as well as, at the same time provide for their greater dignity and more lasting comfort.

On this subject we may observe, that the

Canons of the Christian Church during the first four centuries were decidedly hostile to the removal of a Bishop from one diocese to another.

In citing *the thirteenth of the Apostolical Canons*, I would not be understood to maintain the validity of the *whole* code, for there are manifest marks of popish interpolations from time to time insinuated. It is not necessary even to suppose, that the apostles themselves framed the Canon, which I am about to cite: for it will answer my purpose, if it can be traced to the second century. *It was considered an old Canon* in the time of Constantine the Great, who makes a direct reference to it in a letter to Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, about the year 334. It seems that Eusebius had refused the Bishopric of Antioch, when invited by that Church to preside over it. The Emperor in consequence addressed a congratulatory letter to him, in which is the following sentence—"Truly thy wisdom did rightly, which determined to observe both the commands of God, and *the Apostolical and Ecclesiastical Rule:* rejecting the Bishopric of Antioch, and desiring rather to remain in that, which by the command of God it had received from the first."*

The Apostolical Rule here referred to, was

* Euseb. de Vitâ Const. lib. iii. c. 61.

the thirteenth Canon, which is to the following effect:—

"Let it not be lawful for any Bishop deserting his diocese to pass over to another, though compelled by the people; unless there be some rational cause to induce him to do it, such as the probability that he will contribute by his pious exhortations to the (spiritual) gain of the inhabitants of that diocese. Even this he must not do, *of himself*, but by the judgment of *many Bishops*, and with the greatest exhortation."

By the fifteenth Canon of the first Council of Nice, A.D. 325, the Translations of *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*, were forbidden. To this Canon, I conceive, Constantine alludes in his above-cited letter, under the term "*Ecclesiastical* Rule." Shortly after this period, we find that the Translations of Bishops had come to so pernicious a frequency, that it was again thought necessary in the Council of Antioch, A.D. 341, to prohibit them.

Canon 21. "A Bishop ought not to pass over from one diocese to another; neither voluntarily, nor by popular coercion, nor by the persuasion of other Bishops. He ought to remain in the Church of God, which from the beginning he received, and not go from it to another, according to the rule formerly laid down by the Fathers on this subject."*

* Referring probably to Canon 15, of the Council of Nice.

The troubles of the Church increasing through lax discipline, and the progress of heresy, a General Council was held at Sardica, in Illyria, by the joint order of Constantius and Constans, A.D. 347, at which Hosius, the venerable Bishop of Cordova presided. He had also presided over the Nicene Council, and it was he, to whom *chiefly*, the Church is indebted for that elegant compendium of the Christian Faith, which bears the name of the "Nicene Creed."

The prevailing evil of the times may be inferred from the strong expressions of the *first* Canon, resolved by this Council, at the suggestion of Hosius himself.

Canon 1. Hosius, Bishop of Cordova said, "A custom, not so much *evil*, (in itself,) as *the most pernicious source of corruption*, ought to be fundamentally rooted up:—Let no Bishop pass from his own diocese to another. For the reason of their doing this is evident; since no Bishop was ever found, who went from a greater diocese to a less. Whence it appears, that they are influenced by avarice, ambition, and a desire to rule. Is it your pleasure that such a pernicious custom be visited with the greatest severity—and that such an one be interdicted Lay Communion?"—*Resolved.*

In the Synod at Capua, A.D. 389, Episcopal Translations were forbidden to the Italian Church.

The African Church adopted the same clause, and referred to it, in the thirty-eighth Canon of the third Council of Carthage, A.D. 397. Subsequent violations of this Canon called forth the reprehension of the sixth Council of Carthage, A.D. 419. The fifteenth Canon of that Council is couched in these terms—

"In consequence of the great tumult and seditions which take place, it is resolved, that a custom, which contrary to the Canons, has prevailed in some parts of the country, shall be, by every possible means abolished. Let it not be lawful for any Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, to be translated from one diocese to another."

After this period, church discipline seems to have gradually declined; and too many prelates being personally interested in the continuance of the evil, we seldom meet with canons prohibiting the translation of Bishops. The worthy fathers were usually employed in framing rules for monastic institutions, or other serious trifles. From the beginning of the seventh century, the Church of Rome put forth her encircling arms, and soon brought the greater portion of Western Europe within their embrace. The Persians and Saracens successively overran Africa; and the latter, in less than a century, annihilated *that* Church. The Greek Church in Asia, continually exposed to the incursions of the Saracens, had no time for general councils on points of eccle-

siastical discipline. Her frame was gradually shattered, until at length it sunk under the control of Mahometan rulers, who set up or put down patriarchs at pleasure, without reference to canons of councils, or customs of the Church. The Church of Rome alone weathered the storm, and under it rose to the extraordinary position of an ecclesiastical kingdom predominant over the civil. Among such persons as usually held the chair of St. Peter, we cannot expect to find much zeal in putting an end to the practice denounced by the venerable Hosius, as "the most pernicious source of corruption." It was by this very corruption, so amiable in the eyes of pontiffs, who profited by it, that the evil continued. But notwithstanding the prevalence and ease of episcopal translations, in the dominions of the Pope, the *principle* of it was condemned by the Romish casuists, whose ingenuity in escaping out of their own toils is worthy of remark. An instance of each may be seen in the following extract from Henriquez :—

"A Bishop, by reason of his indelible consecration, becomes a pastor, who cannot properly forsake his flock. *A ring* being delivered to him, he becomes *the husband of his Church*, and ought not, like an adulterer, to desire another spouse—that is, another Church, because she is more beautiful, or more rich. *(pinguior.)* For afrequent and easy translation is rather injurious

than serviceable. *Nevertheless*, on account of personal necessity, *(ob propriam necessitatem,)* or the common good, and sometimes as a reward for merit, it is expedient to translate a Bishop into a richer diocese."*

Having stated the opinions of the primitive Church respecting the translation of Bishops, I do not therefore *necessarily* feel my obligation to coincide with them. The opinion of Hosius, is that which I most cordially approve. With him I think that the morality of the custom is contingent upon circumstances—that the custom is not, *per se*, positively bad, but too frequently a "source of corruption," which is "most pernicious." We may sometimes meet with a Bishop, who shall leave such good and judicious regulations behind him, that his successor, (otherwise incompetent to the duties,) by observing them, shall keep his diocese in order. I do not perceive that the translation of a Bishop deranges his diocese any more than his *death* might; and in this light it should be regarded, for the purpose of practical inferences. There are a few cases, however, in which the possession of the bishopric is professed, from the beginning, to be a mere step to another. In such cases, there is a risk that the concerns of the

* Summæ Theologiæ Moralis Lib. x. c. 34. De Ordinis Sacramento.

diocese may be less attended to, than strict duty requires. These evils may be obviated by enjoining, as Bishop Watson proposes, a longer residence in each diocese, than the present law enjoins—that the prelate "may do the proper work of a Bishop: that he may direct and inspect the flock of Christ; that by his exhortations he may confirm the unstable; by his admonitions reclaim the reprobate; and by the purity of his life, render religion amiable and interesting unto all."*

But to require a longer residence in these dioceses, there should be a previous *increase of value* attached to them; that the Bishop may live in his own diocese *as a Bishop;* and not, as it might now sometimes happen, be only indebted to some living, *in commendam,* that his temporalities shall be greater than those of any of his clergy.

The Translation of Bishops is not, *per se,* a custom *positively bad;* but under the circumstances in which the Bishops of the Church of England are politically placed, "it is a most pernicious source of corruption." The influence which the power of translating Bishops naturally gives to a Prime Minister over the minds of the prelates, is an appalling calamity, when the Prime Minister may be a weak, or a wicked man; a tool in the

* Memoirs of Bishop Watson.

hands of the enemies of the church; or himself a heretic, and an enemy to its doctrines. We know that the infirmities of human nature are common to all men, and that too frequently a man is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to do that from which he inwardly shrinks with abhorrence. We know, also, the readiness with which an interested mind will persuade itself that the opinions which it formerly so strenuously entertained, were altogether erroneous. We know that the candid confession of such an error, is most plausible, and most rapturously applauded by those who profit by it. And under these impressions, I say that it is *unjust*, and *uncharitable*, and *unchristian*, to expose the most venerable body of men in the country, if not to the danger of *dishonesty*, at least to the danger of having *their honesty insulted*; which it would be repeatedly, by proposals from a Ministry who might require an unconscientious vote, for an unpopular purpose—such as the "Emancipation" of the Roman Catholics. The vote of one Bishop is of more consequence to an "Emancipating" Cabinet, than that of three lay peers. It carries with it more force in the House, and is more effective out of it, in converting opponents. It appears under the garb of Christian charity; and it reflects odium upon the opinions of the more staunch of the churchmen. It is an authority to be quoted on every

subsequent occasion. *And therefore* we cannot guard the Church more effectually, than by devising a method by which such persons shall be excluded from the prelacy. The prevention of Translations would be effectual; *but not unless the power of creating Bishops be taken from the Prime Minister.* To this point, therefore, I would most earnestly direct your attention; and I will presently propose a plan by which it may be effected with *an increase of dignity to the Bishops.*

2. The present inequality of the sees forbids the prevention of Episcopal Translations. They might therefore take place by *rotation;* but I do not advocate this method so strongly as the following—for the oldest man is not always the most competent to fill the highest place in the Church.

3. The plan I propose is, *the investment of the Election and Translation of Bishops, in the Bishops themselves:* according to the apostolical institution, and the Canons of the primitive Church, which for a long time struggled against the interference of the laity, and at length triumphed.

This plan is to be preferred for these reasons—it is apostolical, it is canonical,* and it will add to the respectability and dignity of the Bishops.

* According to the Canon of the Primitive Church. See Can. 4, Council of Nice.

It may also be added, that it *has been acted upon partially before in this country, and with great advantage to the Church.*

When William the Third ascended the throne of England, he found the Church deserted by some of its ablest Bishops, who maintaining the doctrines of passive obedience and subjection to the legitimate sovereign, however tyrannical or heretical, could not conform to *his* government. In the hope of recovering them from their Jacobitism, he kept open their Bishoprics as long as he reasonably could; and when at length he found it necessary to fill up the vacancies, how did he proceed? Bishop Burnet shall answer us:—"The Bishop of Ely's letters to St. Germains gave so fair an occasion of filling those sees, that the King resolved to lay hold on it: and Tillotson, with great uneasiness to himself, submitted to the King's command: and soon after, the see of York falling void, Dr. Sharp was promoted to it: so those two sees (Canterbury and York) were filled with the two best preachers which had sat in them in our time. In two years time, the King had named fifteen Bishops; and *they were generally looked upon as the learnedest, the wisest, and the best men in the Church.* It was visible, that in all these nominations, and the filling the inferior dignities that became void by their promotion, *no ambition nor court favour* had appeared. Men were

not scrambling for preferment, *nor using arts, nor employing friends to set them forward:* on the contrary, men were sought for, and brought out of their retirements; and most of them very much against their inclinations. They were men, both of moderate principles and calm tempers. This promotion was such a discovery of the King and Queen's designs with relation to the Church, that it served much to remove the jealousies that some other steps the King had made were beginning to raise in the Whigs, and very much softened the ill-humour which was spread among them."*

These *Whigs,* of whom Burnet speaks, were very different persons from their spurious progeny which now usurp the name. *The present Whigs curse the memory of William as strongly as the first Whigs venerated it; and for the same reason, because he overthrew the Popish tyranny, and the power of the papistical Irish incendiaries to destroy the constitution of England.* William the Third having placed the Church upon a firm foundation, left the guidance and patronage of it, not in the hands of a Minister, but of his Queen; and she promoted, to the preferments that became vacant during her life, the most deserving of the Clergy, without reference to any politics, but those of Christianity.

* Burnet's History of his own Times, ii. 76. Editio Princeps.

Her sole adviser was Tillotson, Archbishop of Canterbury, of whom it is said, that "he had many friends and no enemies."

Upon the death of his consort, King William perceiving the benefit of episcopal recommendations to ecclesiastical benefices, adopted the generous and patriotic conduct of Mary, but (if possible) more judiciously. He wisely considered, that a power so vast as the patronage of the Church, could not safely be lodged in the hands of a single person, however amiable, and however interested in the welfare of the Establishment. He therefore appointed *a commission of eight prelates, to recommend ecclesiastical promotions;* which answered his intentions so well, that he *renewed the commission until his death.**

Queen Anne reserved the Church Patronage in her own hands; but having learned by the experience of her predecessors, that the prelacy was the proper source of recommendation to ecclesiastical preferment, she placed implicit confidence in Archbishop Sharp, and by his advice conducted the affairs of the Church.* I mention these facts in a cursory manner, with a view to show, that *distrust of the prelates* was no part of the ecclesiastical policy, until the accession of

* Life of Bishop Burnet, annexed to his History of his own Times, 716.

† Smollet, i. 450. See also Life of Archbishop Sharp.

George the First; who being much engaged in his Hanoverian and continental avocations, left the ecclesiastical government of England principally to his Ministers.

It is to be observed, as a direct consequence of these different systems, that at no period of the Church have so many able, nay *eminent*, theologians contemporaneously filled the episcopal thrones, as during the reigns of William, Mary, and Anne: and at no period was the Church so low in talented and pious prelates as during the reigns of the first two Georges. Among the Bishops preferred in the reigns of William and Mary, are the names of TILLOTSON, SHARP, PATRICK, CUMBERLAND, STILLINGFLEET, LLOYD, TENISON, and BURNET. The last-named prelate, though promoted more on account of his political than clerical merits, was nevertheless a most able divine, and exemplary bishop. To him, the poorer beneficed clergy are more indebted than to any other bishop, before or since. It was entirely through his exertions that Queen Anne granted the *first fruits* and *tenths* "for the augmentation of the maintenance for the poorer clergy." Queen Anne added to this list of honourable names, BULL, BEVERIDGE, WAKE .... and added, to her own honour, the denial of a bishopric to HOADLY. No sooner had this great and virtuous princess breathed her last, than the UNSCRIPTURAL HOADLY was raised by the ultra *Whig Ministry* of George the First to a bishopric!!

This man, who did in his long life, more injury to the doctrines of the English clergy, than any other prelate who had ever dishonoured the bench of bishops, diffused the poison of his opinions through FOUR dioceses—BANGOR, HEREFORD, SALISBURY, and WINCHESTER. He lived for *forty-six years* a bishop, and left the Church plunged in the most deplorable state of ignorance on the most essential doctrines of Christianity. From this state of ignorance she has happily recovered; and, under God, we owe it to the extravagancies of the followers of Wesley and Whitfield, which sent the clergy *to their Bibles* for arguments to answer them. Having opened THE BOOK, they were not permitted by a gracious Providence to close it. It is open now, until it shall please some "liberal" Whig Prime Minister to assume the Presidency of the "Infidel" College, and (having the power) prefer *its* tutors and supporters to the thrones now occupied by scriptural and moral men.

The Church was never so ably governed, and *never required more able government*, than during the reigns of William, Mary and Anne. To the moderation and firmness of the Bishops *then*, may be primarily referred the present purity of the Church. Had they yielded to the cry so universally raised against the Nonconformists and Dissenters, we should not now be discussing the Claims of the Roman Catholics—most probably we should have been the

petitioners ourselves—not for emancipation but FOR OUR LIVES! Why were the Bishops so firm in their opposition to popular outcry, prejudice and bigotry, even when echoed in the bosom of the Court and Treasury? *Because they felt themselves independent of the Ministry,* and so could consult the real interests of the Church, without sacrificing their own.

The names of ecclesiastical note, during the reigns of the first two Georges, were few, among the Prelates. SHERLOCK, who would have been promoted to the prelacy had Queen Anne lived, was neglected through the reign of George the First, and finally succeeded to the bishopric of Bangor in 1728. The learned and amiable SECKER also ascended the bench during the reign of George the Second.—But there is scarcely any other prelate worthy to be remembered who flourished in those Bœotian ages of the church.

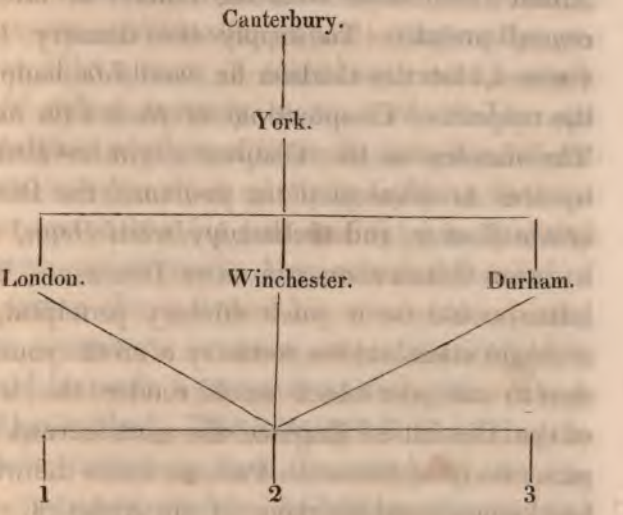
To preserve the present purity of the Church, and to enhance the dignity of her revered prelates, an obvious method presents itself, in allowing the Bishops to elect into their own body, such of the DEANS who may be remarkable for superior piety and learning. It would create an unity of interest among them, which is now perpetually endangered by opposing intrigues: and it would give them that additional *moral* influence over the Clergy, which in these

times of liberalism is essentially necessary to the wellbeing of the Church.

By increasing the value of the smaller Bishoprics, the inducement to translations would in a great measure be weakened; and the derogatorycustom of holding benefices *in commendam*, or minor offices in Cathedrals, would be happily superseded. We should no longer see the anomaly of a *Bishop* in one diocese a *mere Priest* in another, acknowledging and amenable to the authority of a brother Bishop, whose equal he is in church and state.

In the translation of a Bishop, a limitation might be made, which would in a great measure simplify the elective care of the prelates, and prevent any little difference among them respecting the candidates. For example—Let the Archbishopric of Canterbury be invariably offered first to the Archbishop of York, and in case of his refusal, let the election be made between the Bishops of London, Winchester, and Durham. And in case of *their* refusal, let the three next in seniority be deemed eligible, and so on. The Archbishopric of York might in the same manner be confined to the Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester, as sole candidates. In case of a vacancy in any of these three Bishoprics, let the next two or three senior Bishops be added to the remaining two, as candidates to fill the vacancy. Thus a scale of gradation might

be made, which would prevent many unnecessary jealousies, which for the peace of the Church had better be obviated, even if their probability be never so distantly remote.



I see no reasonable objection against the above plan, from the consideration of the respective merits of the Prelates who now fill the above sees.

To prevent any possible unpleasantness of feeling among the Bishops, the election might be ordered by *ballot:* and a rule laid down, that no candidate be allowed to remain upon the list, *for whom* (by his own acquiescence) any solicitation on the part of his friends shall be proved to have been, made—*a fortiori,* all *personal* applications

should be stigmatized with *perpetual* exclusion. Let the same regulations exist in respect of the election of a Dean to a vacant bishopric, and it would be adviseable if the vacancies be filled up within three days after the funeral of the deceased prelate. To supply the deanery thus vacated, let the election be *bonâ fide* made by the respective Chapters *out of their own body*. The vacancy in the Chapter might be filled up by the *Archbishop of the province*, the *Bishop of the diocese*, and *the newly elected Dean*, OUT OF THE CLERGY OF THE SAME DIOCESE. This latter would be a most salutary provision, as it would stimulate the industry of all the younger men to a degree which would render the clergy of the Church of England the most learned and pious body of Christian Pastors which the world has known since the days of the Apostles. To prevent any solicitation on the part of the friends of any of the above candidates for any of the above stations, a lasting stigma should be affixed to the person who has recourse to such unholy and simoniacal proceedings. He should be rendered for ever incompetent to offer himself a candidate. Every *personal* application for a vote should be visited by the still severer punishment of incapacitating the simoniacal clergyman from holding any other benefice than that which he may enjoy at the time, *for the rest of his life*. To supply the vacancy in a cathedral caused by

the promotion of its Dean, or by any other means, *no clergyman should be considered ineligible,* whether *rector, vicar,* or *curate,* whose moral character is irreproachable. It being *one desideratum* in the plan, to consider *all priests,* who are *spiritually* equal, *temporally* so. Upon this subject I could say much, which might reflect severely on the uncharitable and unchristian conduct of those Ecclesiastical functionaries, who deem a curate *inferior* to any other rector than his own—as if, when God and his own acquirements have raised the *mind* of the curate above that of his own contemporary more prosperous brethren, any other distinction should be made between them than those which God has marked. The salutary effect of filling the stalls in cathedrals from the clergy of the diocese, was perceived by Archbishop Sharp, who adopted the plan, and resisted *every* solicitation which tended to interrupt it. His biographer informs us, that the diocese of York never contained such a number of able and zealous clergymen, as during *his* spiritual government. In the acknowledged difficulty of *perfectly* equalizing the bishoprics, it should not however be forgotten, that much may be done to render the less valuable more compatible with the temporal dignity of the prelates.

Bishop Watson proposed, that a portion of the annual proceeds of the several deaneries and

prebendal stalls should be applied to this purpose.—But to this there is the objection, of *injuring* their possessors, if taken from them, after they had once enjoyed it—,or of diminishing the power of usefulness in future dignitaries without diminishing the expectations of the public, from their still-supposed competency. To make the less valuable bishoprics more compatible with the temporal dignity of their possessors, some portion of the public property—such as the *Crown lands*, might be perpetually set aside, with beneficial effects. The prelates so benefited, would thus be freed from the degradation of state pensions, on the one hand: or of *benefices, in commendam*, on the other. By being state pensioners they would be brought iuto continual contact with the ministry—a state of things to be deprecated, and by every possible means avoided for the respectability of the order. The benefices which are held *in commendam* might be bestowed upon some deserving clergyman, to whom the acquisition would be a real and substantial benefit, as well as an honourable distinction for clerical merit.

I apprehend no results unfavourable to the harmony of the church, from vesting the appointment of Bishops in the hands of their brethren. The Bishops in such case would have a double interest in the respectability of their order, feeling themselves personally and indivi-

dually responsible for the character of the prelate promoted. They would perceive that, more than ever, the whole character of the church would depend upon that of its rulers, and they would act accordingly with the most uncompromising integrity.

Or if this principle of election be disapproved, might not the bishops proceed, as did the Apostles in the appointment of Matthias? First, solemnly and publicly pray to God for his interference, and then having selected *two* or more out of the candidates, cause the division to be made between them by *lot*. The same course might be adopted in case of an equality of votes, under the former plan. I anticipate the sneer of the infidel against the "*chance-medley*" of this primitive custom, by denying the existence of such a thing as *chance*, in any important concerns of men, much more, when the concern is that of GOD as well as man. If the blessing of the Almighty attended upon the prayers and supplications of the church in the first century, why should it not now, since Christ has promised to be spiritually "present" with his church "*alway even unto the end*"? As a decisive check, however, to any *possible previous* corruption, let the SOVEREIGN enjoy the VETO.

After all that can be said of the exertions of parish priests, the main welfare of the diocese depends upon its *bishop*. By his conduct, and

opinions, the clergy for the most part regulate their own: some from a natural respect for his station, others from a hope of attracting his notice, and others that they may not be exposed to his reproof. If the bishop then be not, as St. Augustine would have him, "potens doctrinâ *sanâ* ut contradicentes redarguere possit," he cannot reasonably expect his clergy to be "mighty in the Scriptures," or their flocks able to give to every one that asketh them, "a reason of the hope that is in them."

Hence in the impossibility, or rather *present impracticability* of Bishop Watson's plan, of prohibiting translations, what better medicament can be devised for the wounds of the church of England, either received or anticipated, than that which shall at once render the prelates independent, and assure the church, that none but men "sanâ doctrinâ potentes," shall succeed the present able and venerated bishops?

A bishopric is truly, as St. Augustine denominates it, "magnum opus, gravis sarcina, proclivium arduum:" and there have not been wanting men, who have trembled at the responsibility attached to the office, and refused to incur it. When therefore we see so many so ardently desiring the dignity, ought not the guardians of the church of England most severely to scrutinize the *motives*, the *morals*, and the *doctrines* of the aspirants?—especially

at a time when infidelity assumes the garb of "liberality," or under the cloak of candour, is disguised indifference! when hostility to the church is shown by an overweening toleration of the most abominable blasphemies; and when a sneer or sarcasm against her liturgy or her ministers is "*relished*" * by those who PROSPER ONLY IN HER PROSPERITY? Every man who values his country and religion will concede the necessity of a severe scrutiny into the characters of those clergymen who are proposed by what is called "the liberal party," for promotion to the prelacy. This is a party which never hesitates to recommend its own political advocates among the clergy for preferment, without any other consideration than the use which they have made of them in vilifying the institutions which have hitherto upheld the dignity of the land. Among these are some who will not bear the scrutiny of a bench of bishops into their *doctrines;* and therefore, were the prelates the sole electors, these would be left in their present *comparatively* inoffensive condition. But if the appointment of the prelates should ever pass into the hands of an *ultra-liberal* minister, what hope is there to the church, that with *Semi-Arians* for prelates, *Socinians* or *Free-thinkers* shall not possess the

* Reported by the Morning Chronicle in allusion to a profane speech made by an honourable and learned gentleman.

pulpits of these dioceses? The gradation from Semi-Arianism to absolute infidelity, is of easy descent, and the clergyman who descends one step of the declivity, will, if he lives, most probably arrive at the bottom, without compunction, perhaps without distinguishing the different stages of his unbelief. While "the liberality of the age" can persuade a clergyman, that *mere honesty* and *morality* are *vital Christianity*, "The Church is in Danger," and her sons must be on their guard.

III. But if the superior Patronage of the Church, would be properly withheld from the hands of a "liberal" Ministry, why should the inferior Patronage—"a source of corruption *almost* as pernicious," be conceded to them?—— Because, unfortunately, an unwise and an unjust custom, perhaps law, has confided in the advisers of the Sovereign, certain portions of the Crown Patronage, and vested the remainder in the hands of the keeper of his Majesty's conscience—in former times a BISHOP, but *now* a LAWYER—to be disposed of by them, at their sole discretion!

When the Lord Chancellor was an ecclesiastic, he might have been considered, with reason, a fit judge of the qualifications of the unbeneficed Clergy.—But is it possible for a Layman, of a profession most remote from any sympathy with

the Clergy, to be an accurate discriminator of doctrinal and pastoral qualifications for preferment?—Is the keeper of the King's conscience, the keeper of the consciences of *four hundred Clergymen?*

No, Sir!—*It is morally impossible* for a Lord Chancellor, however well intentioned, to restrain his preferment to the reward of *clerical* merit. He *cannot release himself* from the obligation to support the Ministry with which he is associated, by every possible means. And he is unavoidably, if not voluntarily, led to apply his patronage to *reward political services. It cannot be otherwise*—the most honourable of Lord Chancellors could not throw off the necessity under which he lay, of converting spiritual benefices to temporal purposes.—Those temporal purposes were indeed directed, by the blessing of Providence, to the welfare of the nation; and for the sake of the *good* effected, the *evil* was endured.

But it may not be so *always:* we may not always have a LIVERPOOL, or a WELLINGTON, or a PEEL, to counsel good for the nation. Because hitherto we have been protected by a gracious Providence, it does not follow that the same arm will be extended over us for ever. Because our Church was borne safely through the dangers of the French Revolution, it does not follow that she will be carried safely through the Revolution of English Liberals. Even then,

when all communication was cut off between the nations, we had thousands among us who waited but for a leader to rise against the most venerable institutions of the country. Now, when the kindred spirits of liberalism can send a courier from Caucasus to the Hebrides, is there no apprehension of a struggle for the patrimony of the Church? The patrimony of the Church is her *Faith,* and not her *lands,*—and who shall say that there is neither in the House of Lords or Commons, "*a Reformer of Luther's temper,* (if not his talents,) *who will in five years persuade the people to compel the Parliament to abolish Tithes . . . . to expunge the Athanasian Creed from the Liturgy, to free Dissenters from Test Acts, and* MINISTERS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT FROM SUBSCRIPTION TO HUMAN ARTICLES OF FAITH?"

Of all the instruments of corruption which are in the hands of evil Ministers, none can be so easily employed for *political bribery,* as the patronage of Crown Livings. That such would be a legitimate application of patronage in the opinion of a "liberal Ministry," may be inferred from a sentence of a learned gentleman's speech on the evening of the 29th of January, wherein this "liberal" opponent of his Majesty's government, professes that "he can see no reason why a nobleman, or wealthy commoner, POSSESSING A COUPLE OF BOROUGHS, should be pre-

cluded from recommending a friend to the Prime Minister for preferment." Words to this effect were spoken by this honourable gentleman, as an answer to the triumphant exclamations of Ministerialists—that "the Prime Minister will have every thing his own way," and that he has sacrificed not a jot of his legitimate patronage for his place. If the sentiments of a *party* can ever be gleaned from the confession of a prominent leader of it, I think the above declaration of the honourable and learned gentleman, may be deemed a fair sample of the opinion of a "liberal" Ministry respecting the *use* of CHURCH PATRONAGE.

You will assent to the truth of my position, when I urge, (*which I do with confidence,*) that it has been the general opinion of the Clergy for many years, that *no* clergyman, however brilliant may be his talents, however extensive his erudition, however exemplary his conduct, however effective his Ministry, has any chance of a preferment to a Crown Living, except he possesses parliamentary influence, or borough interest—except himself or his family can influence a vote in the HOUSE, or his parliamentary friend consent to barter his voice for his friend's promotion.

Your candour and honourable feelings will I am sure allow, that such a state of things is not calculated to improve the character of the Clergy, or the interest of religion: and you, Sir, who

have attained the summit of distinction among your countrymen, *solely by your own merits*, would, I am persuaded, be the last to promote to a post of dignity in the Church, an undeserving clergyman, merely because his father, uncle, or brother, happened to have a vote, or even "two boroughs" at your disposal. It is because I am assured that such would *not* be *your* practice, that I take the liberty of addressing you in the language which I have employed. I am aware that it is a *very great liberty* which I have taken—but if public men, Sir, were never to hear the truth from those who can communicate it, we cannot expect that they could run over the country to find out abuses themselves. It is the duty of every Englishman to inform his rulers of every correction which any part of the state machinery requires—as much as it is the privilege of these rulers to use their own judgment in correcting the abuses pointed out. If a Prime Minister would not elevate to an office of importance in the state, any man *merely* because his father happened to be a clergyman, he ought not to promote any clergyman to offices of trust in the church, *merely* because his father had a vote in parliament.

An upright Ministry will never be in want of the support of the nation, even if they had not a single "place" to offer.

That "the royal patronage was prostituted to the purposes of parliamentary corruption," was

a complaint of Bishop Watson, in regard to church preferments. I fear it is a very old one—but I believe I can ascertain the origin of the grievance. "In the beginning it was not so,"—it was not so in the reigns of WILLIAM, MARY, or ANNE, but it commenced with the WHIG MINISTRY, which occupied the government in the reign of GEORGE THE FIRST.

I have referred you to the reigns of WILLIAM and MARY, for a judicious system of Church Patronage in the Election of Bishops. To the same period, I beg to refer you for a similarly enlightened distribution of the inferior preferments.

KING WILLIAM, at the beginning of his reign, according to Bishop Burnet, "left the affairs of the Church wholly in the hands of the Queen: she declared openly against the preferring of those who put in for themselves, and took care to inform herself particularly of the merits of such of the Clergy, as *were not known at court: nor using any methods to get themselves recommended.*" "So that," adds the learned Prelate, "we had reason to hope, that if this course should be long continued, it would produce a great change in the Church, and in the temper of the clergy."*

The bestowing of church preferments upon followers of the court, was a system which the

* Own Times, folio. ii. 117. *Editio princeps.*

great and good QUEEN MARY speedily abolished. She found, that the practise of conferring posts of honour upon courtiers, "had no where worse effects than among the clergy, in the disposal of the dignities of the Church; and therefore resolved to break through these aspirings: which resolution she carried on effectually for many years. A constant pursuing that maxim would have a great effect upon the nation."*

Upon the death of Queen Mary, WILLIAM granted a commission to the two Archbishops, and four Prelates, of whom Burnet was one, "whereby they or any three of them were appointed to recommend to all Bishoprics, Deaneries, or other vacant preferment in the church, signifying the same by writing under their hands; and during the king's absence beyond sea, they were empowered of their own authority to present to all benefices in the gift of the crown, that were under the value of 140*l.* per annum."† The commission was renewed in 1700.

Were HIS MAJESTY once assured by a confidential servant, of the immense advantages which might accrue to the church, and consequently to the nation, by a similar disposition of the Royal Church Patronage, it cannot be doubted, but that his affection to the establish-

* Ibid. 663.

† Life of Burnet, annexed to his Works, as above.

ment over which he rules, would prompt him, notwithstanding the opposition of interested persons, to erect this additional bulwark before the church.

A Commission of Bishops would amply answer every ecclesiastical demand, and in my opinion would be preferable to the suggestion of Bishop Watson.—"*Annex to each Bishopric some portion of the Royal Patronage, that every Bishop may have means sufficient to reward all the deserving clergy of his diocese.*"

The Commission of Bishops would check any tendency to family partiality, which might in the above case sometimes overlook real merit: and *a frequent periodical change* in the Commission would be attended by the double advantage of throwing patronage into the hands of all the Bishops in succession, and preventing in a great measure the private tampering of the friends of the candidates for particular pieces of preferment. The same Bishops who constitute any Commission should never act together a second time—at least three-fourths of the Commission should be strangers to each other in their capacity of Commissioners of the Royal Church Patronage. Checked by one another, and by public opinion, the Commissioners could rarely, if ever, bestow any preferment upon an undeserving man. Clerical merit would seldom fail of its reward, unless it might be from the great in-

crease of meritorious men, occasioned by this new arrangement, beyond the ability of the Royal Patronage to remunerate: but even this excess would exalt and strengthen the Church, and thus the very object of the measure would be attained. But the benefit would not stop here. The superfluity of meritorious men would be thrown upon the private patronage of the nobility and gentry, who would find themselves in a manner compelled to countenance them, by the force of example and public opinion. The creepers into the sanctuary through *family* livings, would find themselves still further in the rear of the advancing army of merit than they do now, and would stimulate their minds accordingly to overtake it. Thus again, the Church would receive an increase of strength from among that class of clergymen who now constitute her weakness. "Perpetual Advowsons," (says Bishop Burnet in his *Pastoral Care*,*) "which are kept in families as a provision for a child, who *must* be put in orders, whatever his aversion to it, or unfitness for it may be, bring a prostitution on holy things: and parents who present their undeserving children have this aggravation of their guilt, that they are not so apt to be deceived in this, as they may be when they present a stranger."

* P. 210.

It is from sources such as these that the Church is encumbered by a throng of useless clergymen, who might have been much more suitably employed in fighting the battles of their country in the army or navy, or pleading the cause of the oppressed at the bar of human justice, than in teaching others their own ignorance, or misleading them by their own example of indolence or worldly-mindedness. But a great part of the correction of these evils, is in the power of the government, who, by never promoting any but a meritorious man, or when merit is balanced against interest, invariably preferring the former, might shame the profligate among private patrons into a similar service to their Church and country. *At least*, the example of the government would be attended by the good effect of increasing the number of able men among the clergy; and the influence of their characters would spread among their brethren. If more were to be obtained by personal merit, than by interest, the most useless among the clergy might feel an impulse to improve themselves.

I have said much about *merit;* it will readily and reasonably be answered, that "*merit* is a matter of opinion." It may be so: it is also sometimes a matter of *circumstance.* What might be called merit in a chapel-of-ease at the west end of the town, would be deemed inde-

corum by a country congregation; and *vice versâ*. "Let all things be done decently and in order," was the injunction of an Apostle, and we cannot do better than abide by it. Nevertheless, there are some points of excellence which ought to enter into the character of every clergyman, to afford him a fair claim to the title of "meritorious." I do not require that he shall be among the *most talented*, or *most learned* of his brethren. I conceive that the Church possesses, among the ministers of her ordinances, many a good scholar, or acute wit, who is by no means what may be called a *meritorious clergyman:* and many a meritorious clergyman, who would find a difficulty in translating Thucydides, or the Greek poets; in calculating an eclipse, or determining the relative masses of Jupiter and the sun; in writing an epigram, or "keeping a table in a roar." Neither would I affect to despise the store of human knowledge which is contained in the writings of the pagan sages. I freely admit, that no *thorough* theologian can be destitute of a *thorough* acquaintance with classical and oriental literature; and it would be well for him to have a competent knowledge of philosophy *(truly so called.)* Without a perfect mastery of the Scriptures, a perfect divine cannot be made; and he cannot know the Scriptures perfectly, without being a master of the languages in which they were written, as well as

of those which obliquely illustrate their obscurities. But, I maintain, that a *really* meritorious *clergyman* may exist, without a tenth of the acquirements which constitute a divine. Under the notion of a clergyman who possesses *merit*, I include, FIRST, *a moral and religious character*; SECONDLY, *learning competent to the elucidation and defence of the Christian faith.* If to a *piety* which renders his religion amiable in the eyes of his rational parishioners, he brings the addition of *judgment* in the discharge of his professional duties, and *unostentatious* and *effective eloquence* in the pulpit—if his *pastoral* character correspond with his *doctrinal*, his doctrines being according to the true spirit of the Scriptures; and especially, if he has by his theological writings communicated any valuable information to the student, or facilitated his studies, without weakening his mental energies,—SUCH A MAN I should consider *a really meritorious clergyman*, and one who has a DEMAND upon his country for promotion. Of such men there are MANY, who from want of more ample patronage in the possession of the Bishops, are pining in poverty, or desponding under neglect. It is impossible for the Prime Minister, or his colleagues, to know the nnmber of these persons, or the relative values of their services to the Church of England; but it would be *easy* for every Bishop in his own diocese to ascertain both: and a

COMMISSION of BISHOPS, possessed of ample patronage, might reward each according to his merits.

IV. Having suggested those plans which occur to me as calculated to strengthen the Church of England against any future emergency, I intreat your serious and candid consideration of them: and if the result be contingent upon *your candour* only, I shall be satisfied that the Church will one day regain her rights. In the course of this Letter, I have spoken frequently of *the danger* which is likely to accrue to the Church by the prevalence of the present "Liberality of the Age." It is incumbent upon me to state from *what point* I anticipate the irruption of danger. I will state this briefly:—FROM *(what is called)* "THE EMANCIPATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS." I do not mean to say, that there is any danger of this country being ever converted to the idolatrous religion of Rome; but I do mean to affirm, that there is every probability, that the introduction of Roman Catholics into the House of Commons will ultimately bring about THE FALL OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. The Church of Ireland being trampled under the foot of the Pope, the Church of England will fall under the scourge of the "Philosophers;" our cathedrals will be metamorphosed into "Temples of Reason," and our universities into schools of athe-

ism. I am led to this conclusion, by considering the characters of the majority of those persons in *England,* who *most warmly* advocate the cause of "*religious freedom throughout the world.*" The Emancipation of the Roman Catholics is *most warmly advocated* by INFIDELS, who expect from it, a collision between the two Churches, which will *overturn both,* and make room for that "Philosophy" which deluged France with blood, atheism, and immorality.

The two most plausible arguments of the "Emancipators" of the Roman Catholics, are these:—First, they contend that the Church of Rome is more humanized than she was, by her contact with the "liberal principles of the times:" and secondly, that were it not so, "of very little avail would be the voices of fifty or a hundred Roman Catholics against five times their number of Protestants in one House of Parliament, and against almost the whole of the other House."

1. As to the increase of the *liberality, civilization,* or *charity* of the Church of Rome, we may fairly refer her advocates to the speeches of the Irish demagogues, and the actions of their victims in the towns and villages of Ireland. Evidences are written daily in the blood of murdered protestants, which speak stronger things

than the mellifluous philanthropy of our Liberalists.

It may be edifying to Whigs, to read the opinion of a Whig "of the first order," respecting this same "Emancipation" of "the most oppressed people in the world." The *liberality* of Bishop Watson will be denied by none. He writes thus to the Duke of Rutland, at that time Lord Lieutenant of Ireland: "No man upon earth, I trust, can have more enlarged sentiments of toleration than I have. *But* the Church of Rome is a *persecuting church*, and it is our interest and our Duty, *on every principle of good government, to guard ourselves against her machinations.* There is far less danger to be apprehended by Protestants, in the present enlightened state of Europe, from the effects of popery, in those countries where it is the established religion, *than in those where it is simply tolerated.* The cabinets of Paris and Madrid would execrate the enormities which an infatuated populace in Ireland perpetrate on the score of religion, without remorse. Every indulgence, and even a participation of all civil rights, might be granted with safety to the (Roman) Catholics in England, because they are so far from being the majority, that they do not constitute one seventieth part of the inhabitants. But in Ireland, the proportion between (Roman) Catholics

and Protestants being widely different, THE WHOLE CONDUCT OF THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE DIFFERENT ALSO. *It is for want of seeing through distinctions of this kind that patriots, some of whom are certainly well-meaning men, give you so much trouble.*"*

Perhaps our adversaries will say, "here spoke the *churchman*." Be it so. The remark implies, that *churchmen* have *something* to fear from the "Emancipation" of the Roman Catholics: and it accords with that argument, so often in the mouths of the less discreet of the popish advocates, that "parsons can see nothing in the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics, but the loss of their tithes." You will agree with me, Sir, that the prospect is by no means conciliatory to the feelings of the clergy, or of the lay impropriators who have grown wealthy by the forfeiture of monastic lands. Our opponents, by their own argument, imply the reasonableness of the apprehension respecting the loss of the *tithes*. Can they wonder then that the clergy *(to allow them no principle on the score of religion)* should so strongly oppose their favourite scheme?

2. But it is demanded again, "What in the name of wonder, can *fifty*, or even a *hundred* Roman Catholics do against *five hundred* Protestants in the House of Commons? and against

* Memoirs, p. 132.

the whole of the House of Lords, with the King at their back ?"

I answer this interrogation by another—"*How many were the* INDEPENDENTS in the House of Commons who formed a nucleus of revolution in the reign of Charles the First ?"

A historian, who will not be rashly suspected of "illiberalism," shall inform us:—

"In the PARLIAMENT a *considerable majority*, and a *much greater* in the NATION, were attached to the PRESBYTERIAN PARTY; and it was only by CUNNING and DECEIT at first, and afterwards by military violence, that the INDEPENDENTS could entertain any hopes of success." *

This "inconsiderable" party *did*, however, *succeed*. By never absenting themselves from the HOUSE, they formed a compact body, always prepared to take advantage of every opportunity favourable to their designs. By their constant clamours and litigious conduct, they disgusted the more temperate and less quarrelsome of the members, and finally succeeded in driving them from the HOUSE. *The unprincipled and weak* imperceptibly swelled their train, until at length they became paramount, *trampled upon* THE LORDS, *subverted the Church*, and *brought* THE KING TO THE SCAFFOLD!!

Why may not a body of a hundred Roman Catholics, similarly united, be similarly success-

* Hume's History of England, vii. 21.

ful? A nucleus of hostility being formed against THE CHURCH, what hinders the Arian, the Socinian, the philosopher, from gathering round it? Why should not *they* go hand in hand with the papist, against the common enemy of infidelity and idolatry? Why should not THEY "*ride roughshod*" through the church, as they were lately on the point of "*riding roughshod*" through the palace, *in fulfilment of their threats?* The Church of Rome in 1828, is the Church of Rome under the papacy of Pius the Fourth. No Roman Catholic will deny this; neither will any Protestant, who estimates that Church by the spirit of her members. Can we then be so "illiberal" as to suppose, that the sincere Romanist will not faithfully and firmly maintain the creed of his church, when it requires no other subjugation than that of his reason? It is a fundamental axiom of popery, however it may be glossed over to beguile the credulous, that *there is no salvation out of the pale of the Church of Rome:* and every papist is bound by what he deems more binding than Scripture, to convert his dependents or associates to the same creed. One clause of the form of an oath, to be taken on the profession of faith by a Roman Catholic, is the following: "Hanc veram Catholicam Fidem, *(extra quam nemo salvus esse potest,)* quam in præsente profiteor, et veraciter teneo, eandem integram et inviolatam, usque

ad extremum vitæ spiritum constantissime (Deo adjuvante) retinere et confiteri, atque *meis subditis vel illis quorum cura ad me in munere meo spectabit, teneri, doceri, et prdæicari, quantum in me erit, curaturum.*"*

Is it "*liberal*" to suppose that persons, who admit the validity of this oath, can be so destitute of the common feelings of humanity, as to leave those "*who may come under their care in the discharge of their office,* in the danger of eternal perdition? "*Extra catholicam fidem, nemo salvus esse potest,*" is the groundwork of this engagement. The *Catechism* drawn up for the instruction of the children of Irish Roman Catholics, does not leave this sentence in its original indefiniteness. The "Catholic Faith," here pronounced to be the only one, in which a soul is safe, is *there* decided to be the ROMAN "Catholic Faith;" so that there can be no dispute or doubt upon the present acceptation of the terms employed by Pope Pius IV. It is therefore the opinion of the Roman Catholics of the present day, that out of their own communion there is no salvation. Every *honest* Roman Catholic, impressed with this notion, would therefore consider it his duty to convert those protestant neighbours who might be thrown in his way, for

* Bull of Pius IV., anno 1564, *the corner-stone of Roman Catholicism.*

any length of time together. Were fifty or a hundred such honest and zealous papists admitted to sit by the side of our representatives night after night, for seven years together, is it likely that they would neglect the salvation of, at least, *some of their souls?* I am grieved to confess, that I have more confidence in the zeal of these honest papists, than in the learning or understanding of many of the "liberal" Protestants who might sit near them. These fifty or hundred men, *would be trained to controversy by their priests;* and they would have to contend with those who, perhaps, never open their Bibles, or a divinity book; who have no knowledge of the languages in which the Word of God is written; no acquaintance with Church History, or the grounds of our separation from the Roman Church; and who, if they could once subdue their propensity to doubt all revelation, (a propensity most powerful in ignorant men,) would find more comfort in the faith which admits the absolution of sins by *men*, than in that which requires the subjugation of the heart to the most rigid rules of morality.

It is well known that the Church of Rome has never really relinquished her pretensions to every benefice in this country: and knowing this, can we imagine that her priesthood would be passive under what they would deem a sacrilegious exclusion? The activity and *success* of her

ministers, at the present moment, in Blackburn, Preston, Carlisle, Manchester, London, and other places, are an earnest of more vigorous activity, and more probable success, when the civil offices, open to the members of their communion, would lure them with a prospect of future ascendancy. I impute no blame to our clergy, for this result; it is solely imputable to the "liberality" which fostered at *Stoneyhurst*, the Jesuits who had been ejected from foreign countries as the most dangerous of political incendiaries. This settlement, and the *systematic emigration* of Irish papists from their own country to the populous towns in this, are sufficient causes for the increase of popery, without any negligence on the part of our clergy. The plan of proselytism, in the neighbourhood of Stoneyhurst, is worthy of the genius of Ignatius Loyola. With the characteristic caution of their order, these pioneers of popery are urbanity itself, when in contact with the Protestant clergy of the neighbourhood. They delight not in wordy war; and with Mr. Butler, they deem it "ungentlemanly" in any Protestant to allude to the persecutions of "bloody Mary." They make no public attempts to shake the faith of the poor weaver; *but by encouraging the marriages of Roman Catholic* WOMEN *with Protestant men*, and discountenancing the *converse*, they sap the foundations of the Protestant reli-

gion in many an ignorant and weak breast. These "gentle" conversions reflect no scandal upon Stoneyhurst, and the Jesuits continue as "gentlemanly" as before. It would be attended with much edification to the public, if YOU, Sir, as the guardian of our internal tranquillity, were to order a census to be made, of the *number* of papists in England, distinguishing the Irish "refugees," from the English "aborigines." We should then see whether or not the members be progressive, and whether or not *any system be acted upon privately by the Irish priests, of filling this country with a multitude of the most bigoted and worthless of their peasantry, to be ready on any emergency to start up as advocates for Roman Catholic* "EMANCIPATION!" These would be no mean auxiliaries to their friends in THE HOUSE, either before or after *Emancipation.* It would be especially advisable to ascertain the number of Irish Roman Catholics domiciliated in London and its neighbourhood, that in case of any popish rebellious movement in Ireland, the people of this country might know the actual strength of the disaffected at home.

But these we are told are imaginary dangers, not worthy of a thought. Who tells us so? The very persons from whom we apprehend them. NOT the Roman Catholics, but their *infidel abettors.* For, it is not from the former, drawn up in religious array against the peace of the kingdom, that we may apprehend the most serious

danger. These indeed might be easily pacified or subdued, without any military violence on the part of protestants, *but only on a supposition of perfect religious unity among the latter*, WHICH NEVER DID EXIST, and perhaps never will. Among the most bitter of our enemies, are those who for worldly purposes *appear* to be of the same communion with ourselves, but in reality reject every essential part of our creed. If to these be added the unblushing asserters of their own infidelity, we shall find arrayed against the religion of their country a most formidable body, who would at any time assist the aspiring papist to overthrow the church, in the confident expectation of the ultimate overthrow of all religion. Amidst this concentering hostility of infidels and papists, are *churchmen only* to be uncalculating and credulous?—are *they only* to be blind to the natural consequences of the *present attempted union* of Roman Catholics and Socinians, whose only BOND of union can be *hatred of the church?* The *Christian* dissenters, who upon conscientious motives, refuse to accede to our articles of faith, have, for the most part, the same sincere distrust of the papists with ourselves. But the papists hope to soften their prejudices, by a pretended zeal for a repeal of the TEST ACT, which excludes dissenters from certain offices in the state. The attempt shows the *animus*—for it is an absurdity palpable to a child, to imagine that the church of Rome

has, all at once, become so tolerant of the principle of nonconformity as to be uneasy under any measure which tends to check it—much more likely is it, that in the repeal of the Test Act, she foresees a step towards the destruction of the Church of England. But in the destruction of the Church of England, I firmly believe the *Christian* dissenters foresee the destruction of the PROTESTANT FAITH: and if a natural desire to free themselves from every restraint upon opinion, should induce them to wish for the repeal of the Test Act, they regard the question in *a very different manner* from the Roman Catholics. The only dissenters who have an interest in the fall of the Church, is the anti-christian confederation of Socinus—and these will move every power to attain their end. Cunning, and a steady eye to the object in view, are the characteristics of their policy. But why are these characteristics banished from the policy of our Christian rulers? That the "*conscientious scruples*" of antichristian separatists should be deemed worthy of the consideration of the legislature, while the equally "conscientious" scruples of Clergymen are to be neglected, is a policy which I cannot understand. "Conciliation" appears very plausible in theory, but there is a point beyond which it is dangerous to carry it in practice. For instance, can any benefit result to the Church or to the Nation, by compelling Clergymen to

submit to the unmerited degradation of enrolling in a register of religious rites, the *civil* contracts of those who deny their God? That the operation of this part of the act will tend to bring the Clergy into contempt among their congregations, I cannot but fear; but should it only be attended by wounds to the private feelings of Clergymen who may be called upon to register a *civil* contract as if it were a *religious* one, I should think this objection sufficiently strong in the eyes of those who know that, in every sense of the term, Clergymen are, for the most part, *Gentlemen*. Such it appeared in the eyes of him, whom I have heard you describe as the wisest and most upright man of his age—THE EARL OF ELDON. To be liable to personal insults and defiances, without any means of redress, would be galling enough to any of those honourable and noble persons, who voted in behalf of this impolitic measure. Imagine a low-bred, half educated pupil of the "London University," addressing a Clergyman (perhaps a *Bishop* who may hold a living *in commendam*, and perform the duties himself) in the following strain.—"There Sir, is my certificate, duly signed by a Magistrate; I disbelieve in your Gods—refuse to register it at your peril!" Is it likely, that such probable and designed insults, can tend to anything but the degradation of the Clergyman in the estimation of the witnesses? especially if his sense of

insult should be stronger than his prudence to restrain it? I humbly conceive that the voting for this clause in an act otherwise desirable, was the most short-sighted of all the measures of "conciliation" which have been extorted from the friends of the Church. I admit the propriety of removing the scandal of Socinian protests from the eyes of the Clergy, but I see no necessity for the insult being turned into another channel, conducting to the same point. Let the protesters marry before a Magistrate, if they object to the ordinance of the Church of England —but let them register their civil contracts in a civil office, and not obtrude them upon the ministers of the religion of the land.

I have thought it necessary to advert to this subject, in order to *prove* what I affirm to be the fact—that there is a SYSTEM OF DEGRADING THE CLERGY now acted upon by the enemies of the Church, as the most effectual method of subverting religion, into which too many unthinking friends of the Church are drawn, by the plausibility of professions. The approximation of the Socinians to the Roman Catholics, however earnestly it may be denied by *interested* advocates of the former, is a fact too notorious to be disbelieved by any rational churchman. How far this may affect the opinions of those who, through culpable goodnature, have been drawn in to sympathize with the "oppressed" papists, re-

mains to be seen; but that it will open the eyes of many of the Clergy, who, too confident of security, deem "the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics" an event of no danger to the Church, I firmly hope and believe. The secret union of the bitterest enemies of the established religion, cannot but alarm the most liberal Clergyman whose liberality will permit him to turn a thought to his creed.

It is urged—(and the more frequently the better, for it will undeceive the credulous) that "*the Clergy have nothing at all to do with the Emancipation of Roman Catholics,* THAT *being a purely* CIVIL *question.*" Scarcely a petition from any respectable body of clergymen has been presented in either House, against what are so facetiously termed, the *Claims* of the Papists, but some imprudent liberal, with more nervous irritability than wisdom, has vented his vexation by denying the rights of the Clergy to petition on the subject. And, if I mistake not, it was on an occasion of this kind, that the amiable Bishop of London was called a "*firebrand,*" because he ventured to insinuate that the Clergy *had a right.* Surely, Sir, it is enough, that *the Right of the Clergy to sit in Parliament, which existed until the reign of Queen Elizabeth,* should be taken from them, and that its substitute, THE CONVOCATION, should be rendered a mere puppet-show, without depriving

thousands of the best educated of his Majesty's subjects of their rights as citizens!

So far from silencing the voices of the Clergy, such conduct has only tended to incite them to their duty: and were the Parliament to be now dissolved, they would prove it. It is mainly attributable to the influence of the Clergy among their parishioners, that *for the first time* the advocates of the Roman Catholics were defeated in 1825 in the *House of Commons*. The hereditary protectors of our liberties in the Upper House, are independent of this influence, and exercise their reason in supporting the constitution. These have often stepped in between the Church and her enemies, resisted the latter, and saved the former,—and may they never forget, that the *support of the Aristocracy, is* THE CHURCH. History demonstrates, that when the Church has fallen, the nobility has shared her fate. *The enemies of the one, are enemies of the other.* Of all persons, therefore, the nobility are most interested in maintaining unimpaired the integrity of the Church. And if they continue firm in resisting any measure which may tend ultimately to weaken her, she need not fear the hostility of papists and infidels. But a thousand contrivances will be resorted to by these adversaries of her religion, to beguile *the aristocracy into voting for their own ruin.* Were a popishly-affected Prime Minister, for instance,

to be firmly seated at the Treasury---(*absit omen!*) popishly-affected Commoners would be raised to the Peerage, for the express purpose of passing that impolitic Bill, so justly obnoxious to all friends of religion—while popishly-affected gentlemen would represent the government boroughs. Thus, nothing would be easier for the Prime Minister, who had a little patience, than ultimate success in carrying the "Catholic Question." By the influence of his voice at the Treasury benches, he could at any time bring the Bill through the Lower House. He might take it to the Lords, recommended, perhaps, by a good majority---but *there* at present is a compact phalanx of spiritual Peers, ready to resist successfully any danger to the Church. But these men are mortal---one by one they go silently to their long homes, and as silently may a popishly-affected Prime Minister fill up the vacant seats. A new school of Prelates succeeds the old: "Liberals," or what is as bad, men of such convenient political subserviency, that like the Speaker Leathall, "they have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House (or its Master) is pleased to direct, whose servants they are."*

Under such a probable contingency, every

* Hume, Hist. vi. 470.

churchman must be grateful to the Protestant Sovereign, who withheld from Prime Ministers popishly-affected, the Patronage of the Church. Most accurately did he interpret that clause in his CORONATION OATH, which bound him, "To THE UTMOST OF HIS POWER *to maintain the laws of God, the true Profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant Reformed Religion, as by law established.*" Not that, in the "Emancipation" of the Roman Catholics, he apprehended the conversion of the people to *Popery*, but that he foresaw, in the promotion of this measure, THE ULTIMATE UNION OF ALL THE ENEMIES OF THE CHURCH, and THE ULTIMATE SUBVERSION OF THE RELIGION OF THE LAND.

In the principles of the present head of His Majesty's Government, the Church of England reposes her most implicit confidence—not merely that he will not promote a popishly-inclined clergyman to the prelacy, but that he will not promote ANY ONE, to any clerical dignity or trust, who bears not about him the testimonials of his own merit, in the soundness of his doctrines, the purity of his morals, and the competency of his learning.

But human life is uncertain, and human affairs unstable.—The only certainty is DEATH; and that assures us, that we shall not always have the protection of a WELLINGTON or a PEEL over the interests of Religion, as maintained by the

Church. Every good Minister lives and acts, not merely for the *present*, but for the *future*—and he desires to leave behind him, for the gratitude of posterity, a pledge of his devotion to the welfare of THE NATION.

THE WELFARE OF THE NATION, IS IN THE PURITY AND STABILITY OF HER NATIONAL FAITH; and while she possesses the former she can only expect the latter, from THE SECURITY OF THE CHURCH.———THE SECURITY OF THE CHURCH, I have endeavoured to show, consists especially, in two particulars, *the Independence of her Rulers*, and *the Efficiency of her Pastors*. The Dependence of the Bishops upon a contemporaneous Ministry, and the Perversion of the CHURCH PATRONAGE to political purposes, are the two evils which afflict and weigh down the Church:—THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE BISHOPS, and THE APPROPRIATION OF THE CHURCH PATRONAGE TO REWARD CLERICAL MERIT, will relieve her of the evils and perpetuate her doctrines.

The further consideration of these questions, I leave, with all respect and confidence, to *Yourself, to the Clergy*, and to the *Lay-believers* in the articles of the Church.

To YOURSELF—as the most judicious and unprejudiced correcter of abuses, which the age, or nation has yet seen.—Assured, that if you deem them *necessary* and *practicable*, you will not forsake them through *the fear of men*.

To THE CLERGY—as the sworn children and soldiers of that Church, by which they must either *stand* or *fall*, being members of a profession which admits no relinquishment of its standard or its badge.

And to LAY-BELIEVERS—as interested, *deeply interested*, in the INDEPENDENCE, RESPECTABILITY, and EFFICIENCY of that ORDER, by which the purity of their Faith is kept inviolate and inviolable.

I am, Sir,

With the greatest Respect and Admiration,

Your humble Servant,

A SON OF THE CHURCH.

THE END.

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